LABOUR MONTHLY

EDITOR R. PALME DUTT

NOTES OF THE MONTH — R.P.D.

DUMBARTON OAKS — Quæstor

SOUTHPORT TO BLACKPOOL — George Allison

WHY VERSAILLES FAILED — B. Stein

INDIAN TRADE UNIONS

SOCIALIST-COMMUNIST UNITY IN ITALY — Pietro Nenni

"HOW TO WIN THE PEACE" — William Rust

BOOK REVIEWS

POLITICAL PROSPECTS

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CONTENTS

October, 1944

Page

Notes of the Month—*Political Prospects* by R. P. D. 289

Dumbarton Oaks by QUAESTOR 299

Southport to Blackpool by GEORGE ALLISON 305

Why Versailles Failed by B. STEIN 309

Indian Trade Unions 313

Socialist-Communist Unity in Italy by PIETRO NENNI 314

"How to Win the Peace" by WILLIAM RUST 315

Book Reviews—

Searchlight on India by R. P. D. 317

G.B.S. Boiled Down by R. P. A. 319

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

Political Prospects—Liberation of Europe—War and Politics—Final Stages of the War—No Under-Estimation—Nazi Strategy—Quebec Decisions—Far Eastern War—World Organisation—Opportunities and Dangers—New Problems in Britain—Switch-Over in Production—Has the Government a Plan?—Government and Controls—Exports and Wages—Economic Perspective—Conditions of Full Employment—Planning Peace Production—Political Problem—General Election Prospects—Swing to the Left?—Tests of Public Opinion—Dilemma of the Left—Choice of Three Paths—Labour Conference Responsibility — Communist Party Congress

WITH the advance of democratic victory in Europe, the question of the political future in Britain comes inevitably to the forefront—alongside and in close association with the urgent issues of the closing stages of the war in Europe, the war in the Far East and the peace settlement. The Trades Union Congress, representing now a peak membership of close on seven millions, meets in October and will have before it a bold and far-reaching programme for post-war reconstruction. The Communist Party Congress meets at the end of October and will deal with every aspect of the world situation and have before it the programme "Britain for the People." In November the American Presidential election will govern the future political course of the United States. In December the Labour Party Conference meets; and the Executive has already been considering the future course of the Labour Party in relation to the Government and the coming general election.

AS liberation sweeps forward over the former occupied and enslaved countries of Europe, great democratic changes are taking place in every country. The upper-class reactionaries and traitors associated with collaboration and support of Nazism go down to their well-merited trial and sentence. The representatives of the national resistance movements, with the working-class parties in the forefront, take the helm. The people in arms, the Maquis of France, the Sackcloth Brigade of Belgium, the Partisans of Slovakia, the People's Army of Poland, the National Liberation Armies of Jugoslavia and Greece, are revealed as the saviours of their countries, in association with the armies of the United Nations. The Soviet armies are acclaimed in the streets of Bukarest and Sofia amid scenes of unequalled popular enthusiasm. All the elaborate schemes to hold down France in ignominious inferiority "for many a long year," and to refuse recognition to its Provisional Government, vanish into thin air before the effective sovereignty of the united Government of national liberation led by De Gaulle, even though there are still heavy internal problems to be solved in France. The Belgian parliament meets to prepare new elections and a new Government based on the forces of resistance. The Balkans throw off the shackles of Nazism and anti-democratic governments, and enter on the path of fraternal democratic development. The rising in Slovakia prepares the liberation of Czechoslovakia. The future of a strong independent democratic Poland is assured. Even in Finland the strong-

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holds of fascism and reaction begin to weaken. Progressive democratic Governments, with Communist representation, hold power in France, in Italy, in Jugoslavia, in Greece, in Rumania, in Bulgaria, and are likely soon to be paralleled in Belgium, in Czechoslovakia and Poland. Small wonder that the signals point the way forward to corresponding democratic advance in Britain, within the conditions of the political situation in this country.

THE political situation in Britain cannot be separated from the war and the world situation. The final phase of the war in Europe has begun, with the entry of Allied armies on German soil. But there is danger of under-estimating this final phase; of easy assumptions that its beginning may be treated as equivalent to its end, and that attention may now be switched to the domestic scene in isolation, without regard to the critical military and political problems of this concluding stage of the war in Europe and of the wider world situation. Such delusions of political manoeuvring or electioneering on the left, no less than on the right, could become not only irresponsible, but self-defeating; especially if such tendencies were to become identified with liberal-pacifist illusions or a denial or repudiation of the stern tasks of the final destruction of Nazi power, the military occupation of Germany, the punishment of war criminals, the exaction of reparations and the prevention of new aggression. Progressive advance in Britain is bound up with a democratic anti-fascist policy on a world scale and fulfilment of the programme of the United Nations.

THE dramatic speed of the liberation of France and Belgium, in contrast to the gloomy preceding pictures painted by reactionary opponents of the Second Front, has stimulated public confidence. But it has also swung the pendulum of opinion to the other extreme (encouraged to a certain extent by exaggerated official propaganda or by the premature official gloating over the end of the flying-bomb menace) and fostered conceptions that the end of the war in Europe may now be treated as automatically following, without further concern for the heavy final tasks which have to be fulfilled, and above all without regard for the hundred ways in which victory can be thrown away at the winning-post, especially in such a complex military-diplomatic-political situation as the final defeat of fascism.

HENCE any consideration of the political prospect in Britain must be based on a clear recognition of the immediate facts of the war situation and of the wider world political prospect, which for a long time to come will govern the internal situation in Britain far more directly than in any preceding period. It is necessary to recognise, in the first place, that the speed of the liberation of France and collapse and rout of the German forces left there is not yet the same thing as the defeat of the main German forces. That speed was facilitated by the action of the French patriots (whose 200,000 dead in four years of struggle against Germany —*Times*, September 6—represents a higher proportion to population than for this country in five years of war on all fronts): many of the principal towns, such as Paris, Rouen, Lille, etc., were first conquered by the Maquis, and then handed over, sometimes to a couple of press correspondents, as representatives of the Allied armies. This situation cannot be paralleled in Germany. It was further facilitated by the limitation of the available German forces in the West, in view of the unyielding policy of the German High Command to maintain

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the overwhelming main forces on the East as the decisive front (165 Nazi divisions, according to the *News-Chronicle* of September 2, in addition to the thirty satellite divisions); while, apart from the armoured divisions whose resistance was victoriously broken in Normandy, the bulk of the remainder consisted of weak reserves, as the bag of prisoners revealed, of youths, old men and press-ganged foreigners. The stubbornness of the resistance on the Warsaw front, where the main Nazi forces were concentrated, has shown the extent of the fighting still to be carried through. With the beginning of the invasion of Germany on the West, alongside the new Soviet offensive on the East, the final decisive battles are thus now opening.

THE present declared policy of the Nazi leadership, to prolong the struggle by all available means and with all resources within Germany, is confirmed by the practical measures taken for extreme and desperate mobilisation, as well as by the systematic annihilation of every potential nucleus of an alternative Government within Germany. The recent series of political executions have demonstrated this: first the trial and execution of the potential opposition leadership of the Right from within the army (Witzleben, etc.); then of the Right in the civilian camp, and of the Centre (Goerdeler, Leuschner, etc.); then the murder of the already imprisoned leadership of the Left (Thaelmann, leader of German Communism, and Dr. Breitscheid, representing the Social Democrats supporting unity). The aim is manifestly to prevent the formation of an alternative Government which could carry out the surrender. This does not exclude parallel peace feelers in the hope of splitting the Allies. Their calculation is thus to prolong the conflict, even into conditions of chaos, to continue irregular resistance indefinitely even after the defeat of the armies in the field, no longer in any hope of victory in the present war, but with a view to sabotaging any settlement and taking advantage of any rift or weakening of Allied united policy, so as to find the way to future revival.

IT is in this context that the Quebec Conference of Britain and the United States takes on its significance in respect of the war in Europe, alongside its main strategic tasks for the speeding of the war in the Far East. The Quebec Conference dealt with "all aspects of the war against Germany and Japan." According to Mr. Churchill, the approach of the completion of the war in Europe

> raised other problems of a military or quasi-military nature. These had to be understood in common by the two Western Powers, so that what followed the defeat of Germany would be of the same design of co-operation. They had to consider processes that would come after the unconditional surrender of the Nazis (*Times*, September 18).

THESE questions are concerned with the armistice conditions to be laid down and the plans for the inter-allied military occupation of Germany and initial forms of government and administration following Nazi defeat. It is stated that a Three-Power Conference or consultation may be expected to follow Quebec for the final working out of the necessary decisions. It is evident that, even in the event of the most optimistic hopes of rapid and decisive military victory and collapse of the German armies being achieved in the near future, very great and far-reaching issues still remain for the completion of the destruction of Nazi power and the German war machine and the preparation of the conditions for the future settlement. These questions will confront the Government and the people of Britain during the coming year, alongside all domestic issues.

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SIMILARLY, the Quebec Conference has been concerned with the development of the war in the Far East. The closer approach of the completion of the war in Europe has made possible the adoption of plans for very greatly intensifying the scale and speed of the operations for the final defeat of Japan. Hitherto the war in the Far East has developed as a secondary theatre of war. It will become the primary theatre. In Europe the process of liberation from France to the Balkans is far advanced. But the development of the war in the Far East to a full war of liberation has still to be completed. This is bound up especially with the question of India, the democratic unification and freedom of development of China, and the future position of Burma, Malaya and other former colonial territories seized by Japan. In India the present Gandhi-Jinnah negotiations offer hopes of fruitful advance, even though the essential steps from the British side for the release of political prisoners and the opening up of negotiations for a settlement have still to be taken. In China the negotiations of the Kuomintang and the Communist Party appear to be showing favourable progress towards the solution of a dangerous situation and opening the way to democratic development in China. All the leading Powers of the United Nations are vitally concerned in the situation in the Pacific. Here also questions of paramount importance will confront the Government and the people of this country during the coming year, towards which all progressive sections will need to concert their positive policy with far closer attention than has yet been given.

FINALLY, the preparatory steps for world organisation under the auspices of the United Nations, both for security and for international economic co-operation, have already reached an advanced initial stage. These have found expression in the positive outcome of the Dumbarton Oaks Conference and the Bretton Woods Conference, as well as in the proceedings of the Unrra Conference now opening, the establishment of the World Agricultural Commission, the provisional oil agreement, and the negotiations on civil aviation. But the degree of favourable progress so far achieved cannot blind us to the strength of the antagonistic forces whose success would wreck the prospects of international agreement and peace. The critical attitude of conservative financial opinion both in Britain and in the United States, on opposite grounds, towards the Bretton Woods plan has found expression equally in the editorial columns of the London *Times* and the *New York Times*, and has been reinforced by the more adventurist opinions of financial isolationists on both sides.

SIMILARLY, the plans for adequate and effective machinery for world security, which must necessarily be based decisively in the first place on the full co-operation of the three strongest World Powers, are still under fire and threatened from all sides by the multifarious campaigns conducted in opposition, sometimes in the name of resistance to "Great Power domination" or "power politics" (as if there could be any worse "power politics" than anarchy of the Great Powers), sometimes in the name of Empire isolationism or the old-style American isolationism, sometimes in the name of a regional balance of power (Anglo-America or "the Atlantic Community" set over against the Soviet Union), or on the grounds of the old anti-Soviet hostility or remains of mutual Anglo-American distrust. The attempts to raise the issue above the partisan level in the American presidential election campaign have not been altogether successful; and the situation has not been eased by Mr.

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Dewey's selection, as his official adviser on international questions, of a Mr. Dulles, who distinguished himself prior to Pearl Harbour by declaring that the Axis represented no menace to the United States. Thus it is evident that it will require the firmest unity, not only of the leading Powers of the United Nations, and of all the countries of the United Nations, but also within each country of all progressive supporters of the aims of the Atlantic Charter, and the Moscow and Teheran Agreements, to ensure the victory of these aims.

AT the same time, the closer approach of the completion of the war in Europe is raising new problems within Britain, especially in the field of industry and organisation of the home front, with the prospect of partial demobilisation and the switch-over in industry to the new requirements of the war in the Far East and the beginnings of conversion to peace production. These are finding expression in the acute questions of redundancy now arising in many spheres of industry, which are only a foretaste of the large-scale problems of transition which will increasingly come to the forefront. Here it is evident that there is only too much ground for the responsible declaration of the President of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, Jack Tanner, on September 10:

> In my opinion, and from my knowledge of the situation, the Government have not yet any real clear-cut plan, or if they have, they are not prepared to produce it at the present time. I am afraid there is not that co-ordination and co-operation between the various Government Departments which is as necessary for peace as it has been for war production.

IF we look to the further prospect of the transition to peace conditions in Britain, there is still graver cause for concern, on the basis of the existing indications of official policy. The Government has, it is true, recognised the necessity to maintain the controls for a transitional period. It has not conceded the more extreme demands of the harum-scarum agitation of the most reactionary industrialists and newspaper proprietors for a general lifting of controls and a short-lived profiteers' orgy as the quickest way to economic catastrophe. It has recognised governmental responsibility in relation to employment, and the basic incorrectness of the policies pursued in the inter-war period. All this in principle might represent an important advance. But the practice, as the White Paper on Employment Policy and the speeches of Sir John Anderson and other Ministers have clearly shown, falls far short of what post-war conditions will require, and would, if uncorrected, prepare an outcome comparable to the inter-war period, or even more dangerous, in view of the radically altered position of Britain in the world.

IN the Government's view, the continuance of the controls is seen, not as a powerful positive weapon for organising production and the most effective use of the nation's manpower, but as a temporary evil, rendered necessary for a brief transitional period by the shortage of goods after the war, and to be removed as soon as possible to make way for the resumed domination of the powerful monopolist interests which strangled the economic life of Britain, wasted its resources and held back its productive development in the years before the war. Hence the Government's policy, abandoning the aim of full employment, inevitably assumes the return of unemployment, and only proposes remedial measures for the consequent inevitable unemployment, which is assumed, in the table printed in the appendix to the White Paper, to vary from a level of 5 per cent. in good times to 12 per cent. in bad times, or from one million to two-and-a-half

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millions—much the same as the level in the disastrous years between the wars. In the words of Sir William Beveridge, commenting on the proposals:—

> The Government in the White Paper are fighting unemployment. They ought to be planning for productive employment.
>
> —(Sir William Beveridge, in the *Economic Journal*, July-September, 1944).

But only a very active mobilisation and political leadership of the labour movement and all progressive sections can bring about such a basic change in policy.

THIS general line of the Government's domestic policy is bound up with the wider perspective which has found expression in the speeches of Sir John Anderson and other Ministers, and which has become embodied in the catchword of "a poor Britain." Sir John Anderson, in his Budget speech, spoke of wage rates having risen above the level of the rise in the cost of living, and the consequent necessity of allowing the price level to rise, that is, for a reduction in real wages. Similarly, Sir Stafford Cripps, in his speech at Belfast on August 18, spoke of the necessity to increase exports by 50 per cent. and urged the consequent necessity "in the first post-war years to cut down deliberately and temporarily our own standards of consumption." The wide acceptance of this picture of inevitable post-war poverty for Britain (even if not of the consequent wage policy which is seen as the conclusion by the employing interests) was echoed by Mr. Bevin in his declaration at Birmingham on July 2 that "we are broke; it's no use beating about the bush; we have spent everything in this struggle."

BUT this analysis, and the conclusions which are based upon this analysis, run entirely contrary to the actual facts. The central governing fact for the post-war economic perspective is not the immediate short-term problems of shortage and restoration, which will inevitably first stand in the forefront of attention, but the gigantic increase in productive power during the war, which, on the basis of common effort and unified state planning of production for war needs, has increased the productive output of this country by 45 per cent., according to the Ministry of Production figures, in spite of five millions having been withdrawn from production, and has produced the minimum goods for civilian consumption with 35 per cent. of the labour force. For the United States the productive increase, consequent on full employment of resources and man-power, is still more striking, and is reflected in an increase of output of goods by 80 per cent. above the level of 1939, with ten to eleven million workers withdrawn from production. The central problem of the post-war economic era is to ensure the full utilisation of this enormously increased productive power, and its further extension, not restriction, for the corresponding raising of the standard of living in Britain and throughout the world.

THIS full utilisation of the increased productive power achieved in wartime, for peace purposes, which would find its expression in full employment and higher standards, cannot be realised on the basis of the old limitations and policies of monopolist restriction which prevailed before the war. Already before the war the conflict between the increase of productive power and the policies of monopolist restriction led to economic crisis on a scale never before experienced; and this same conflict, carried to a still higher degree, would lead to an even more disastrous outcome after the war, unless far-reaching changes in economic policy are initiated in time. The

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full use of increased productive power and full employment is impossible unless the consequent increased output can be absorbed; and this in consequence makes not only desirable, but indispensable, the raising of wages and standards in Britain and on a world level, as well as the further development of productive resources. The existing level of real wage rates over the field of industry as a whole has fallen, while output per man-hour has increased; that is, the individual worker is producing more than before the war, and receiving less per unit of output, under wartime conditions. Under peacetime conditions this lag will have to be made good, if full employment is to be achieved; the alternative would be large-scale depression, short time and unemployment. The full use of Britain's resources will equally require the operation of far-reaching plans for large-scale world economic development, implicit in the proposals for international economic co-operation, and resulting in the rapid raising of standards in the backward countries, and not only in Britain. The old pre-war measuring rods no longer apply here.

ON the other hand, the existing official perspective and policy sees the situation only in static pre-war terms; contemplates only the loss of investments and pre-war markets as the measure of Britain's economic position after the war; and draws the conclusion that the only solution must be to lower wages and standards of consumption in order to meet the intensified competition through the increase of world productive power. This is precisely the policy which would lead to the most catastrophic outcome. Since seven-eighths of production is for the home market, a general lowering of wage-levels and standards would spread depression over the greater part of the industrial field, supposedly for the sake of strengthening the competitive power of the minority sector represented by exports. But, in fact, the question of exports cannot be separated from the organisation of production and the economy of the country as a whole; depression over seven-eights, with consequent waste of resources, idle plant and man-power, will necessarily raise costs also for the export industries. In fact, the industrial competition mainly feared in these calculations, that of the United States, is not based on lower wages, but on higher wages than the British level; the relative advantage of American industry rests on the higher development of mechanical power (estimated at one and a half to two and a half times the British level). The solution of the post-war problems for British exports cannot be separated from the tasks requiring to be fulfilled for the development of British post-war economy as a whole: the full utilisation of plant and resources, full employment, modernisation of technique, cutting of wasteful burdens and development of planned international economic co-operation in assisting to raise the level of technically backward countries.

THE fulfilment of these tasks will require radical changes in post-war Britain, for which both the objective situation and popular feeling are ripe. They can only be accomplished by a Government representing the most progressive forces of the nation, backed by and possessing the confidence of the overwhelming majority of the nation, and thus capable of overcoming the obstacles presented by those reactionary monopolist interests which were responsible for the stagnation and decay of the pre-war era. The universally recognised weakness and inadequacy of the plans at present put forward by the Government, for domestic reconstruction, especially in the cardina'

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economic field, are only the reflection of the domination of these same reactionary interests. This has shown itself most conspicuously in such questions as land control and the reconstruction of Britain's towns, where the unsatisfactory character of the proposals put forward has aroused a storm of criticism from all sections of opinion, including from the united voice of the local authorities concerned. The essential problem is thus not merely an economic, but a political problem.

IT is in this context; alike of urgent problems and tasks of the international situation in the coming period, and of the problems and tasks of domestic reconstruction and economic development, that the British political prospect needs to be considered. There can be no going back to pre-war conditions in politics any more than in economy or in international relations. Britain holds a changed position in a changed world. The programme of the United Nations to which Britain stands committed, for the defeat of fascism, for alliance with the Soviet Union and close association with the United States, for international political and economic collaboration, is a progressive programme on a world-scale, which corresponds to the vital interests of all sections of the people. The same united effort of the entire nation which has participated in the defeat of fascism by the world alliance will be necessary to complete the victory, to ensure the settlement and promote these further aims. At the same time, the conditions are ripe and urgent for new changes and new progress within Britain, both to ensure the fulfilment of these international aims and to carry through the indispensable immediate tasks of economic and social reconstruction at home. The relations of political forces of ten years ago, expressed in the Munichite parliament, which have had to serve as a makeshift basis for the present Government, no longer correspond to present conditions or needs, or to the present feelings of the people. Vital changes need to be carried through in the political world, in parliamentary representation and in the leadership of the nation on the basis of that representation, in order to be equal to the tasks of the coming period. This is the immediate problem of the coming general election.

THERE is no question of the dominant tendency of popular opinion in the present period. Under the influence of the experience of the war against fascism, of the exposure of the old discredited reactionary policies which prevailed before the war, of the new democratic experiences of common effort in the war, of the alliance with the Soviet Union and its example, of the advance of liberation and progressive Governments in Europe, there has been by common consent a powerful current of popular opinion towards the left, against the reactionary policies associated with the Chamberlainite majority before the war, among wide sections towards socialist ideas, and in general towards forward-looking policies of progressive social, economic and political advance. From such symptoms as the Cairo Parliament of the Middle Eastern forces to the newspaper polls in Britain the same general picture is revealed.

THE newspaper polls may not be always an accurate reflection of public opinion; but in this respect they agree, whatever their auspices. After wholesale denunciation of nationalisation, the *Daily Express* finds 66 per cent. of public opinion in favour of nationalisation of the mines, and 59 per cent. in favour of the nationalisation of railways. After widespread campaigns in many press organs of large circulation caricaturing and abusing State Control, the *News-*

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Chronicle finds 68 per cent. of public opinion in favour of the maintenance of State Control after the war. After vocal campaigns, both among certain sections of the right, and also within the labour movement, against the policy of unconditional surrender for Germany, the *News-Chronicle* finds 76 per cent. of public opinion for the policy of unconditional surrender. The overwhelming majority of the nation is firmly anti-fascist and for the fulfilment of the programme of the United Nations in international affairs; and at the same time for progressive social and economic advance at home, including the maintenance of State Control and carrying through of measures of nationalisation. The problem of the coming general election is how to ensure that this undoubted majority of public opinion shall find corresponding majority representation *in Parliament and a corresponding* Government to carry out its wishes.

THIS problem is complicated by the peculiar character of the electoral system in this country. On the face of it, it might seem elementary and obvious, in accordance with the principles of democratic theory, that if the majority of the electorate want certain lines of policy, the parliamentary representation freely chosen by that electorate should reflect that majority opinion and thus enable a Government to be formed which would carry out those lines of policy. But that is not how the electoral system of this country works. If representation in Parliament corresponded to the proportions of political opinion among the electorate (so-called "proportional representation"), there would be no special problem in this respect; the majority opinion would be correctly represented according to its strength, and it would not be difficult for a corresponding Government to be formed on that basis. The Speaker's Conference has, however rejected this method of representation. Not only the Conservative Party, for obvious reasons, but also official Labour policy, at present opposes such democratic representation, and upholds the peculiar theory that it is not the function of Parliament to provide an accurate mirror of the opinion of the people, but to provide an efficient basis for the government of the people. This view is, we believe, deeply mistaken from the viewpoint of the interests of the labour movement no less than of democracy: but the question is, for the moment, decided in practice; and further discussion on this issue will not affect the coming election. The coming election will be fought on the existing electoral system; and this means that, even if there is a considerable majority of progressive opinion among the electorate, that majority will not necessarily obtain *majority representation in Parliament,* so long as the various parties, groups and sections composing it are divided among themselves.

IN this situation there are three main types of possible set-up of political forces in the coming election. The first is the so-called "coupon" type of election: that is, that the existing Coalition Government, based on the three principal parties, should go to the country as a single alliance, allocating seats on the basis of the existing supporters in Parliament of the coalition. This would stereotype the existing parliamentary representation, which is admittedly obsolete, and rob the electors of effective freedom of choice between the main political tendencies. This alternative has been rejected by the Labour Party, and may be regarded on present indications as ruled out, although some modified form may be attempted, apart from the Labour Party. The second alternative is a free or unfettered election, in which all the various parties, groups or indivi-

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dual candidates would present themselves for the choice of the electorate, and would conduct an equal conflict with one another, without any electoral understanding between any groups. This would give the electorate freedom of choice; but the result, as explained, might defeat the wishes of the electorate, if the various progressive candidates cancel one another out, and the reactionary minority in consequence obtain majority representation. The third alternative is that the Labour Party should take the initiative to establish an alliance with all other progressive sections, so as to ensure a single Labour or progressive candidate in each constituency against the reactionary candidate. This would give the electorate not only freedom of choice, but the possibility to ensure that their majority wishes should obtain corresponding majority representation in Parliament and a corresponding Government.

THE decision on this question rests with the labour movement, and is likely to determine the outcome of the future election and the consequent character of the Government in the coming critical period. Up to the present the official expression of Labour policy has advocated the line of "independence" in the coming election, not only in the sense of independence from Tory reaction, but also in the sense of independence from any association with other sections of opinion in the labour movement or other progressive sections, even at the expense of thereby giving the majority to Toryism. This policy is based on the theory of the "two umbrellas," expounded by Mr. Greenwood in a recent parliamentary debate (and repeated by him in his recent address to the Building Trades Workers' Conference), that every elector must be either Tory or Labour, and that the Labour Party should have monopoly rights in the representation of the left. There is not yet, however, that political unity of the labour movement itself which could provide the initial basis for such a claim; and in reality such an attempted straitjacket does not fit the facts of present political opinion. The attempt to ignore the existence of the section of working-class opinion represented by Communism, or the sections of progressive opinion represented by Common Wealth or Liberalism, does not solve the problem of the political situation, but in the end, in claiming monopoly rights, is in danger of sacrificing the substance of power for the shadow, and handing over permanent majority representation and political control to Toryism. The Labour Party, as the major party on the left, has the right to take the initiative and have the decisive voice in determining the conditions of collaboration; but it has also the responsibility of leadership, to ensure that the wishes of the majority of the people shall be fulfilled.

THE Labour Party Executive has had these questions before it at its recent meeting. It is understood that a statement has been prepared, which is not yet available at the time of writing. But there is no doubt that these questions will be among the most important issues coming before the Labour Party Conference in December, and will call for responsible decision. There is already much speculation on the immediate political future in this country, on the future of the Coalition or the conditions of termination of the Coalition, or future forms of Government. These questions of tactical decision cannot easily be determined in advance of the decisive factors of the war situation which must necessarily govern them. They are not the key questions at this moment. The experience of the movement has again and again shown that abstract tactical pledges in advance

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are of small significance in relation to the event. What is important is the lines of policy to be followed, and the building up of united political strength for the fulfilment of those lines of policy. It is the building of labour and progressive unity that is the practical issue before the labour movement today in relation to the coming election. The tasks before us today are plain. First, the completion of victory over fascism, and the safeguarding of that victory in the settlement which must follow. Second, the building up of the strength and unity of the labour movement in this country, and of the broadest unity of the people around the leadership of the labour movement, in order to ensure the fulfilment of all those further aims at home and abroad to which victory over fascism will open the road. The Communist Party Congress at the end of October will devote all its efforts to the furtherance of these objectives.

R. P. D.

September 19, 1944.

Dumbarton Oaks

by QUAESTOR

AT a joint press conference held on August 29, at Dumbarton Oaks, it was announced that the United States, Britain and the U.S.S.R. are in full agreement that the future security organisation of the world should consist of (i) an Assembly composed of the representatives of all peace-loving nations; (ii) a Council formed of a smaller number of nations, including "the principal States," and a number of other States elected periodically; (iii) an international Court of Justice, and other instruments for the peaceful settlement of disputes.

At the time of writing, no further official statement has come from the conference of British, Soviet and United States representatives which made this announcement. Nevertheless, it is timely and necessary to consider the situation in which the conference has been working.

I

The world needs the new security organisation even more than it did in 1919. But this does not mean that there can be a simple return to the methods and proposals of 1919. There are fundamental differences between the position then and the situation now.

The war which ended in November, 1918, was an imperialist war over the control of markets and colonies and spheres of influence, over a new redivision of the world by force of arms which German imperialism was attempting at the expense of older Empires. The war, the last stages of which we are living through, is a just war of the peoples, against the fascist threat to the very bases of modern civilisation—a threat of which the imperialist aspirations of Hitlerite Germany are the essential part, but only a part.

As the war of 1914-18 was ending, the victorious Allied imperialists were passing on to an offensive against the freedom-loving peoples of Europe. Intervention in Russia was in full swing. Intervention against Soviet Hungary was being planned. In the Balkans, in Poland, in the Baltic States, and most of all in Germany, the first confused efforts of the peasants and workers to create the very basis of democracy, by shattering the dictatorship of reactionary forces, were being crushed one after another. The present war ends with the greatest capitalist Powers in the world in close alliance with the U.S.S.R. It ends with truly popular coalitions of all

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classes in fighting alliance against the Hitlerites in many countries—formed in the framework of the various resistance movements and in the coalition governments, from Communist to Conservative and Catholic, in an increasing number of countries.

The war of 1914-18 ended with the Soviet Republic weak in everything but the will of its people, blockaded and boycotted, excluded from the Peace Conference and from the League of Nations, barred from the rest of the world by a "cordon sanitaire" of terrorist dictatorships all along its border. The present war ends with the U.S.S.R. one of the greatest Powers in history, grown stronger (even materially) in its dreadful trials since 1941, an active participant in international life, its commercial relations in the post-war years eagerly sought for by the business men of Britain and America. One after another, the peoples of Eastern Europe are successfully revolting, not only against the hateful Nazi barbarians, but against the regimes created twenty-five years ago, regimes which did more than anything else to bring the barbarian yoke upon them.

The balance of forces in Europe in 1944 is no longer what it was in 1919. And there is little doubt that the same is true of China, of India, of the many Latin American Republics which in recent years have moved towards real democracy — democracy for the people, not only in paper constitutions —for the first time.

II

Because of this changed balance of forces, the coming international organisation of security can and must be something different from the League of Nations, notwithstanding superficial similarity in form.

Of course, the League of Nations had its positive significance. It was the first international organisation of its kind, even though the U.S.S.R. was excluded until 1935, and the U.S.A. remained outside throughout. The principles set forth in its Covenant, particularly those of Articles X, XV and XVI—the principles of collective security and of sanctions against the aggressor—remain a positive contribution to international experience. The League's public discussions by leading statesmen, the concentration of the latter in one centre at periodical meetings, gave an opportunity, if the press had properly used it, for far-reaching education of the peoples in foreign affairs: and, in fact, the League (not always with the assent of its leading statesmen and officials) was so used in part.

But the weakness of the League was far more pronounced than its strong points. From the very first, and for many years, its machinery was turned against the U.S.S.R. in every possible way. It was placed at the service of Mannerheim, of the Polish dictator Pilsudski, of the Baltic dictators; it placed loans at the disposal of the dictatorships in Hungary and Bulgaria, and it glozed over Mussolini's rapine in Greece and Albania long before it did so in Abyssinia and Spain. Thus the League, instead of binding the peoples together in fraternity, served from very early years to create distrust among them.

But more serious was the fact that there was no unity between the Great Powers who led it; Anglo-French antagonism distinguished its earlier period, while their joint hostility to the U.S.S.R. was the marked feature of its later years. As Lord Perth (formerly, as Sir Eric Drummond, Secretary-General of the League in 1919-33) wrote to the *News-Chronicle* on March 16 of this year:—

It was the common experience of those who were most intimately concerned with the proceedings of the League that when the greater nations were united, the smaller ones were content; it was only when there was dissension between the

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Great Powers that trouble arose, and in such cases the smaller powers were often able to act as honest brokers.

The same fatal effect on the League of the lack of collaboration between the Great Powers was stressed by a writer in the Soviet Trade Union journal, *War and the Working Class*, in December, 1943:—

It is necessary to remember that the League, throughout its existence, could never, by its very structure, make a decision which was not approved by the leading Powers. Otherwise any decision would have been impossible. A criticism of the political activity of the League of Nations during the twenty years of its existence is at the same time a criticism of the foreign policy of the Powers which played a leading part in the League. . . .

It is easy to understand that the responsibility for the League's failures falls upon its leading members, and not upon the faulty structure of that institution. There is no doubt that the constitution of the League of Nations made it essentially possible to put into practice a policy of general security. If this policy was not put into practice and was sabotaged by all possible means, the fault lies not with the Articles of the League's constitution. . . .

It is a common accusation against the League of Nations that its weakness resulted from its not possessing its own armed force, which could be used against the aggressor. But it was not the League's lack of an armed force of its own that was decisive. Article XVI. of its constitution, which provided for sanctions against aggressors, was based on the assumption that every Member State would place a part of its armed forces at the disposal of the League to enforce its sanctions. There existed, therefore, the possibility of using these armed forces to enforce the League decisions.

In spite of this, the leading Powers of the League renounced, of their own free will, the application of military sanctions against aggressors. It was not, therefore, the League's lack of an armed force of its own that was decisive, but the fact that the leading Powers of the League were unwilling to make use of its military sanctions.

In one respect, however, the League Covenant was particularly defective —in its insistence for unanimity, which meant that the Great Powers could often hide their responsibility by encouraging small States to obstruct and delay. This was repeatedly shown during the fight of the Spanish Republic against German and Italian intervention.

Mr. Churchill recently wrote to Lord Cecil, on the occasion of the latter's eightieth birthday (published on September 14): "This war could easily have been prevented if the League of Nations had been used with courage and loyalty by the associated nations. Even in 1935 and 1936 there was a chance, by making an armed grand alliance under the aegis of the League, to hold in subjection the rising furies in Germany, or at the very least to enter into armed conflict on terms far more favourable than those eventually forced upon us."

It will be seen that Mr. Churchill's estimate does not differ radically from that of the Soviet article quoted earlier.

III

There is solid ground for stating that the basis exists today for the creation of an international security organisation which will take account of the weaknesses of the League of Nations. Apart altogether from articles and personal expressions of opinion which could be found in many countries, a series of diplomatic acts, engaging the responsibility of the most powerful States in the world today, testify to the widespread understanding that the prerequisite and essential feature of such an organisation is the closest intimate friendship of the Great Powers.

Among such documents must be listed first the Stalin-Sikorski Declaration of December 4, 1941, which proclaimed that the new organisation of international relations after the war must be based on "the unification of

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the democratic countries in a durable alliance,'' and that respect for international law should be maintained by ''a collective armed force.'' A practical example of what was intended was given in the Anglo-Soviet Treaty of May 26, 1942, under which the parties, agreeing on the closest co-operation after the re-establishment of peace ''for the organisation of security and economic prosperity in Europe,'' made it plain that their desire was, not to work alone for the twenty years' period of the Treaty, but ''to unite with other like-minded States in adopting proposals for common action to preserve peace and resist aggression in the post war period'' (Articles III and V).

Already, on February 23, 1942, Britain and the United States had agreed that the settlement of the Lease-Lend account between the two countries after the war was to be such as ''to promote mutually advantageous economic relations between them and the betterment of world-wide economic relations.'' An identical agreement was concluded between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. on June 11, 1942.

These were the necessary preliminary stages. The advance to an international security organisation took a historic stride forward in the decisions of the Moscow Conference, published on November 1, 1943. There Britain, the Soviet Union and the U.S.A. ''recognised the necessity of establishing at the earliest practicable date a general international organisation, based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all peace-loving States and open to membership to all such States, large and small, for the maintenance of international peace and security.''

Thus not only the material conditions but also the understanding and explicit determination exist for the new world organisation which should profit from the errors of the past.

But, it may be asked, is prolonged collaboration between the Great Powers really possible? Can capitalist States, with their inherent tendencies to antagonism, really co-operate with each other for any length of time when they have reached the magnitude of the U.S.A. and the British Empire? Can such great empires, in their turn, collaborate with a great Socialist State like the U.S.S.R.? These questions are being asked, and demand a reply.

IV

To the first question—as to relations between the capitalist States—it must be answered that the tendencies to antagonism undoubtedly exist: but that there are no ''tendencies'' equal in strength to the collective will of peoples roused to action. This has already been proved once or twice in recent history: for example, by the prevention of war on Soviet Russia by the British workers in 1920, and by the forcing of economic sanctions against Italy by the clearly expressed will of the British people for collective security, through the Peace ballot in 1935. In the course of this war, the peoples of many countries have been roused to collective action in a way which would have been thought impossible five years ago. In demanding the prevention of wars, the roused peoples know that they can rely on the support of the U.S.S.R., which can no longer be represented to them (as in the days of Baldwin and Chamberlain) as a ''broken reed,'' ''torn by internal dissensions,'' ''unable to stand up to a modern army,'' and so forth. Furthermore, there is serious ground for hope that the peoples of the larger part of Europe, thanks to the democratic advances mentioned earlier, can no longer be used as catspaws or small change in the struggles of greater States: it is very possible that developments on the same lines in Latin America and in China will have

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the same results. The shift in the balance of world forces towards the power of the peoples, already mentioned, necessarily *restricts* the scope for untrammelled conflict between the great capitalist Powers.

But obviously the will of the people has to be informed and organised. The maximum vigilance of all progressive forces; the widest possible explanation to the peoples of the causes which lead to wars between capitalist States; the earliest possible measures to emancipate the colonies, and India first and foremost, and thus eliminate one of the most fertile causes of capitalist rivalry and wars—these are obligatory and indispensable, if the possibility of maintaining long-term collaboration between the capitalist States is to become a reality. And no one can say that these aims are unattainable.

V

With regard to the second question —as to relations between capitalist States and the U.S.S.R.—the greatest possible stupidities are often uttered. That there is a contradiction between the Socialist order and the capitalist order is obvious: but there is no law of nature that that contradiction must *inevitably* lead to an armed "showdown" between the Socialist State and the capitalist States. It is necessary to recall that the leaders of the Soviet Union have more than once clearly declared their belief in the possibility of a protracted co-existence of the capitalist and the Socialist worlds: and moreover that, when Europe had been ravaged by war on the last occasion, they declared that the positive collaboration of the two worlds was required by the interests of humanity.

Thus, at the Genoa Conference in 1922, they stated:

While themselves preserving the point of view of Communist principles, the Russian delegation recognise that in the present period of history, which permits of the parallel existence of the old social order and of the new order now being born, economic collaboration between the States representing the two systems of property is imperatively necessary for general economic reconstruction.

When the Soviet delegation to Genoa reported failure, the Soviet Central Executive Committee nevertheless declared (May 18, 1922):—

However irreconcilably the Genoa Conference may have ended, the whole course of international relations of late testifies to the inevitability at the present stage of historical development of the temporary coexistence of the Communist and bourgeois systems of property.

Five years later, at the Fifteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U. (December 2-19, 1927) Stalin in his political report explicitly declared:—

The basis of our relations with the capitalist countries consists in the admission of a coexistence of the two fundamentally different systems. Experience has fully justified it.

Stalin's political reports at the Sixteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U. (1930), the Seventeenth Congress (1934) and the Eighteenth Congress (1939) all contain statements of the guiding principles of Soviet foreign policy which constitute ever new reaffirmations of such belief. We need recall here only the latest, a few months before the present war: "We stand for peace and the strengthening of business relations with all countries. That is our position; and we shall adhere to this position so long as these countries maintain like relations with the Soviet Union, and so long as they make no attempt to trespass on the interests of our country."

VI

There is no immanent *necessity* for the breakdown of international collaboration in the post war world, after the terrible lessons learned and the big displacement of the balance of forces in favour of the peoples. But the real

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danger threatening international collaboration lies in the existence of influential political forces in this country and in the United States, hostile either to the Soviet Union, or to the very idea of international collaboration, or both, under the impulse of selfish class instinct.

A number of examples of the expression of such hostility were given in the May issue of the *Labour Monthly*, to which we refer the reader. There have been others since, worthy of attention. Thus, on April 20, Mr. Shinwell, in the House of Commons, made a cautious excursion in the direction of the notorious proposals of General Smuts for a "great European State" (based on a bloc of Western Powers) which should counterbalance the U.S.S.R., "the new colossus that bestrides the Continent." Mr. Shinwell urged the Government to consider "some kind of arrangement with the Western European countries—Scandinavia, the Netherlands, Denmark, liberated France—which could dovetail into our economic Commonwealth." Although Mr. Shinwell ostensibly was speaking only of economic arrangements, Sir Alfred Beit, who officially supported him on behalf of the Tory Party, was quick to take him up on the political field. Beit spoke of the "encouragement" given by General Smuts's proposals, and of the "disappointment" caused by the Canadian Government's refusal to endorse them; and he continued:—

It appeared that the Canadian Government preferred an international system for safeguarding peace, on the lines of the Moscow Declaration of last October, rather than a four-Power group. The Moscow Declaration clearly implied the restoration of a League of Nations, and he could not persuade himself that that would be more likely to lead to peace than the association of Britain with the other Great Powers.

It must be noticed that Sir Alfred Beit—one of the more outstanding members of the Tory Reform Committee—is not content with supporting Smuts's proposals, which would effectively undermine the association of the four Great Powers: he tries at the same time to pretend that such an association is necessarily opposed to the Moscow proposals. On the other wing of the Tory Party, Lord Dunglass, formerly private secretary to Mr. Neville Chamberlain, intervened in the foreign affairs debate on May 24 on much the same lines. Europe, he said, was going after the war to be "a cauldron of suspicion, civil war and revolt." There was no foundation, in morals or in facts, upon which a collective peace system could safely be built at the present time. "This whole conception of international organisation backed with power is new. It is experimental. We have no guarantee whatever that it will succeed; we have no guarantee even that the three countries who have the power at their disposal will be able to live at peace with each other . . . Meanwhile, I am pleading for a security plan for ourselves." And then he proceeded to restate Smuts's proposals to bring about "a rough equality of power" with America and the U.S.S.R. by forming a Western European bloc—thereby tearing asunder the association of the Great Powers, as well as the international security system. Mr. Hore-Belisha, who spoke on the same lines the next day, did not conceal in his arguments that the proposal was directed against the U.S.S.R.

Equally frank was Mr. Walter Elliott, M.P., a former cabinet minister, when writing in the *Evening Standard* on June 26 to inform the world that Europe was turning, and would turn, for comprehension to Britain, which understood the language of Europe and could even speak it. Mr. Elliott's argument in this connection needs to be seen in order to be

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believed, as the mind of a fairly representative Tory M.P.:—

America is not Europe. Russia is not Europe, the British Empire is not Europe. These three will hold sway. The British Empire is not Europe, but the United Kingdom is, or, at least, is infinitely nearer Europe than either of the others. . . . There is a European way of life, a European mode of thought which is not that of the North American Continent or the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics . . . Europe, the continent of nations, of sharply marked boundaries—the Pyrenees, the Alps, the Carpathians—has always felt lost and uneasy in the face of the cold wind blowing from the unbounded steppes, and now, on her other cheek, comes the first sough from the equally boundless prairies.

It would be easy to wander off into discussion of the boundless insolence of this statement—its tranquil assumption that the European countries of today, who know that the corpses of eight million German soldiers lie rotting in Soviet soil, turn for "comprehension" to Britain against the U.S.S.R.: or that the peoples of the U.S.S.R., who for 2,000 years have had a share in European civilisation, and today have contributed to European civilisation the greatest experience in history—that of creating the first successful Socialist State—are not part of Europe, and cannot speak its language. But the essential feature of Mr. Elliott's argument is that it breaks up the unity of the Allies, tears asunder the close intimate collaboration built up so painfully in the war years, at such a ghastly price. Repeating unconsciously all the Hitlerite arguments about the necessity for protecting Europe from the "Asiatic Soviets," it tries to destroy beforehand the very basis of any future international organisation of security.

It will be seen that the ememies of that organisation are not inconsiderable, either in numbers or in influence. The more clearly there emerge, at Dumbarton Oaks or elsewhere, the contours of such a mighty organisation, its immense possibilities for good as well as its unquestionable practicability, the greater vigilance and the greater effort will be needed to combat its enemies, and to ensure that this time they shall be defeated.

Southport to Blackpool

by GEORGE ALLISON

FOR five years the British Trade Unions, under the leadership of the Trade Union Congress, have worked and fought for victory over fascism. Many tributes have been paid by statesmen and Service Commanders to the sterling work of the Trade Unions in all spheres of the industrial side of the war effort.

Now, as a result of the unity and co-ordinated action of the United Nations, "simultaneous blows are being directed against the Nazi enemy from the east and west and the south," blows which herald the liberation of occupied Europe, and the collapse and unconditional surrender of the Nazi armies. Victory is in sight, and it is precisely this fact that makes the 76th Annual T.U.C. opening in Blackpool on October 16 the most important in its history.

When Congress met in Southport in September last year its work was almost equally divided between mobilising the movement for the needs of the war and giving preliminary consideration to the new problems that victory will bring. This year, without relaxing in the final effort necessary for victory in Europe and at the same time mindful of the next stage of the struggle in the Far East, Congress is obliged to give serious and detailed

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attention to the wide range of questions coming under the category of post-war reconstruction. Trade Unionists in the services and in industry will look to this year's session of the T.U.C. to make a positive and challenging contribution on international and national affairs.

According to the recent announcement by Sir Walter Citrine, the aggregate affiliated membership of the T.U.C. represented at the forthcoming Congress is 6¾ millions. This is a record figure and when it is realised that a number of unions are still debarred by the Trades Disputes and Trade Unions Act of 1927 from being affiliated, its right to speak on behalf of organised labour is still further enhanced.

By virtue of a resolution adopted last year the General Council of T.U.C. was authorised to draft a plan on post-war reconstruction covering measures of national ownership and control of industry, a policy of full employment; control of raw materials and finished products, prices and standards of quality. It is clear that this plan, together with proposals coming from the affiliated unions is the basic issue coming before this year's Congress.

In recent months leading spokesmen in many sections of industry have been expressing with increasing clarity and insistence the post-war aims of big business. In general, the aim is, freedom from all wartime controls at the earliest moment, and a return to the old pre-war conceptions of private enterprise. As against this conception, there is a growing insistence throughout the labour movement that the State must continue to exercise a growing measure of control and direction of industry if the nation's resources are to be used for the benefit of the people and not for the few.

There is overwhelming support throughout the movement for the nationalisation of at least the basic industries, coal, steel and transport. The General Council and quite a number of its affiliated unions have been giving specific and detailed consideration to this key problem of post-war reconstruction. It is clear that the movement will expect not only a declaration on principle, but a pronouncement which will specify the forms of national ownership guaranteeing that full operational and financial control of these basic industries is taken out of the hands of the former owners and administered on behalf of the general public.

Closely allied to the question of national ownership is the continuation of control in other spheres of industry for the immediate post-war period and the manner in which that control can be exercised in order to give the respective Trade Unions a more authoritative voice in the direction of their own industry within the framework of a national plan.

As the end of the war draws nearer and military requirements are decreasing, the problems of the reconversion of British industry on to a peacetime basis becomes increasingly urgent. There already exists throughout the movement a deep-rooted suspicion that peace will bring a disastrous repetition of the experiences following the last war. The absence of any clear statement by the Government only increases the existing scepticism. The General Council of the Trade Union Congress has already given some serious thought to this question and have already raised the question of a Government survey of all factories, so that a general plan for conversion to peace-time industry can be made plain to all.

Particularly in this sphere are foresight and planning vitally necessary. The development of "redundancy" in some sections of industry is itself a warning signal. Unscrupulous em-

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ployers are ready to use redundancy as a means of weakening the position of the Trade Unions in the factories. In the absence of clear plans spells of unemployment are inevitable, with consequent effects on morale and the prospects of post-war stability.

Allied to the question of redundancy is the problem of demobilisation, in Civil Defence and subsequently in regard to military demobilisation. The early conversion of industry to peacetime requirements must of necessity be closely allied to the release of labour from war industry and the services.

Coming also within the scope of post-war reconstruction are questions dealing with the development of industrial production to meet the requirement of devastated Europe and the colonies, and the need for British economy being linked up with international trade.

On all of these questions the Trade Union Congress is one of the most competent authorities. Its job is to exercise the same authority and influence in shaping the post-war world as it has exercised in contributing to the defeat of fascism. Undoubtedly the Report of the General Council covering this and pertinent issues will be keenly scrutinised and debated.

The General Council of the Trade Union Congress has already made a clear and welcome pronouncement on one of the basic points of post-war policy. The proposal that the Government should be asked to introduce a Bill "giving the Minister of Labour authority to legalise agreements concluded between employers and workers in all industries for the establishment of a forty-hour week" raises this issue as one of immediate concern for the whole of the country. The most powerful case, based on technical developments alone, can be built to justify this measure: all of the outworn arguments of reactionary employers and Civil Service diehards can be countered, and the manner in which the issue is presented makes it possible to secure the active participation of all sections of the labour movement in pursuit of this demand.

Already the Trade Union Congress has a clearly defined attitude on the Beveridge Report and post-war education. Undoubtedly Congress will have something to say about the postponement of the school-leaving age, but the main interest, in this sphere, will mainly be focused on the Government's White Paper on National Health Service and particularly its shortcomings in relation to the industrial medical service.

Yet another issue which has flared up in a big public way since last year's Trades Union Congress is the question of equal pay for equal work. Here is an issue which, until it is solved, constitutes a continued menace to the whole structure of wages and conditions in a large number of industries. There is, of course, general agreement in principle on the relatively simple issue of equal pay for equal work, where women are employed on the same or similar jobs: but endeavours made by many of the unions to put the principle into practice are met with most niggardly concessions on the part of the employers. Apart from the straightforward question of equal pay for equal work there is the problem of the almost inhuman wages and conditions imposed upon female workers on jobs specifically regarded as "women's work." This kind of employment is likely to increase rather than diminish with new technical developments, and there is every reason to believe that Congress will tackle all these aspects of this question, not only from the standpoint of safeguarding the conditions of male employment, but also from the angle of guaranteeing equal status for woman-labour in industry.

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There are a number of questions intimately bound up with the status and rights of the trade union movement itself which will loom large in Congress discussions. First and foremost is the continued persecution of the movement through the existence of the Trades Disputes and Trade Unions Act of 1927. With unfailing regularity Congress has almost annually declared its complete opposition to this iniquitous measure imposed upon the movement, and instructed the General Council to make the strongest possible representations to the various Governments that have been in office since the Act was passed. Unquestionably Congress will repeat its basic demand on this question once again and will pose the question as a test for the Government and employers in the development of post-war relationships.

Somewhat akin to the Trades Disputes and Trade Unions Act stands Regulation I.A.A., a measure introduced by the Government after consultation and with the consent of the General Council. Many of the bigger unions have deemed this measure to be unnecessary and it is more than likely that Congress will be asked to categorically demand its withdrawal.

One of the most important internal questions raised at last year's Congress was in the form of a composite resolution which instructed the General Council to take immediate steps to examine the structure of the trade union movement and report to Congress on overlapping and competition, desirable amalgamations and structural changes that would lead to greater efficiency.

The General Council has worked almost continuously on this question throughout the year. The problem is one which has been previously examined in great detail by Congress. It is generally recognised that the present structure and forms of organisation limit the strength and activity of the movement and leave breaches which the employers are never slow to take advantage of. There is, throughout the movement, a general appreciation that a greater degree of unity and co-ordination is necessary for the complicated problems of the post-war period to be successfully tackled. There is ample evidence, shown by the amalgamations already achieved amongst foundry workers and miners, and the talks proceeding amongst engineering union and other smaller kindred organisations, that there is a keen desire for sweeping improvements.

There is one other principal issue which will be of great interest to the Congress delegates. At Southport last year Congress passed a resolution urging the release of political prisoners in India, the formation of a National Government elected by the Indian people, and the granting of dominion status. In taking stock of the situation in India today Congress will be influenced by the fact that the political deadlock still remains, and India has been in the last year subject to the scourge of famine and serious economic dislocation.

The visit of Mr. S. A. Dange, President of the All-India Trade Union Congress, to this country, will have done much to establish a closer understanding with the General Council of the T.U.C. and many of the affiliated unions, with the movement in India. These facts help forward the possibility of Congress going back to this question with renewed endeavours to strengthen the bonds of solidarity between the unions here and the movement in India and at the same time end the existing deadlock, while developing a way to self-government in the immediate future.

In summing up it can be said that while Congress has still to be concerned with the final stages of the war against Germany and Britain's com-

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mitments in regard to the Far East, its main considerations will be towards laying the basis for permanent peace and lasting security.

The power and authority of Congress has never been so great. No one can deny its right to a major voice in post-war affairs. Its deliberations and decisions will directly contribute to the future of the millions of men and women coming under its immediate influence.

Why Versailles failed

by B. STEIN

The following article under the title "Lessons of History," appeared in War and the Working Class No. 16.—Ed. L.M

AS the final defeat of Hitlerite Germany draws nearer, political thought in the countries of the anti-Hitler coalition is turning more and more to problems of post-war structure, in particular to the problem of creating a system which will prevent the repetition of German aggression. The peoples cannot but ask themselves why it was that in the space of a quarter of a century mankind has twice been plunged into the vortex of bloody and devastating war, and why it was that imperialist Germany, having been defeated in the First World War, was able twenty years later to start the fires of a second world war.

This legitimate question naturally leads to another, namely: what were the mistakes committed by the victors in the First World War which made it possible for Hitler Germany to unleash the second? The attempt even briefly to formulate the principal mistakes committed in relation to Germany during and after Versailles leads us to the following conclusions.

In October, 1918, Germany sued for peace. The Allies, as we know, met her request and the only demand apart from military surrender put by President Wilson was for a change in the German Government and the removal of Kaiser Wilhelm, with whom the Allies refused to negotiate. This demand was met when the Ebert-Scheidemann Government was formed and when Wilhelm II fled to Holland. The armistice was signed at a time when the German armies were outside the borders of Germany and when not a single foreign soldier had set foot on her territory. The German General Staff, headed by Hindenburg and Ludendorff, insistently demanded that the Government should expedite the armistice precisely in order to prevent the Allies from entering German territory. Their aim was achieved, and Germany was not occupied by the Allied troops.

This was undoubtedly the first gain for the German military set after they had been defeated in war. The German Army, beaten in the field, was able to return home and later became the nucleus around which were built armed forces designed for a new act of aggression, the preparations for which began immediately the war ended. An armistice of this character not only made it possible for Germany to preserve the backbone of her army, but also to prevent any encroachments by the Allies upon the basic branches of her national economy and specially her powerful industrial machine. This industrial machine was preserved intact and it served as the basis for preparations for a new act of aggression. At the moment the armistice was signed on November 11, 1918, the victor countries were occupied not only with the fate of vanquished Germany, but also with the problem of armed intervention in the Soviet Union. It was

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this that motivated the Allies to insert a secret clause in the armistice terms consenting to allow the German troops to remain in the territories of Russia, especially the Baltic Provinces, which they had occupied. It was these German troops who with the consent and support of the Allies carried out armed intervention in the Baltic Provinces, endeavouring at one and the same time to consolidate Germany's position in the east and to create conditions which would make it possible to secure more lenient terms in the future peace.

This secret clause in the armistice terms became the starting point for diverse plans for turning German aggression against Soviet Russia. We know that at the time of the Paris Peace Conference Germany endeavoured to take advantage of the Allies' hostile attitude towards Russia, and repeatedly offered her services in the matter of armed intervention.

The plans for armed intervention contemplated utilising not only Germany. At the Paris Conference, as we know, the Polish State was formed. Without going into the whole problem of the creation of Poland, which undoubtedly conformed with the vital interests of the Polish people, it should be remarked that the practical solution of this problem was distorted by tendencies inimical to Soviet Russia.

The creation of an independent Poland was first discussed by the Allies at Paris on November 2, 1918—that is, before the conclusion of the Armistice with Germany. Pichon, French Foreign Minister, supported by Marshal Foch, formulated the French programme for the borders of the future Poland. Pichon, in advancing the demand for German evacuation of Polish territory, said literally the following: "I want to insist that by the territories to be evacuated should be understood those territories which were comprised by the Polish Kingdom before the first partition of 1772." This statement was immediately replied to by Balfour, British Foreign Secretary, who said (retranslated from the Russian), "I listened to this proposal with uneasiness. The Poland of 1772, you say, should be the Poland of 1918. This is not what we were out for, nor what we obligated ourselves to. We obligated ourselves to resurrect Poland inhabited by Poles. The Poland of 1772 does not conform to this aim: it did not consist exclusively of Poles. It will include non-Polish territories, and Polish territories will comprise only a part of it."

Pichon had to yield after Colonel House, President Wilson's representative, declared that he fully agreed with Balfour. However, the correct position outlined by the British delegate was not adhered to. While the Paris Conference was still in progress, the Allies agreed to send General Haller's Polish Army formed in France into Eastern Galicia. This army immediately started armed war on the Ukrainians, which continued until the middle of 1919. The Paris Peace Conference did not define Poland's eastern borders, thus laying the groundwork for her subsequent seizures of non-Polish lands.

As we know, Soviet Russia had no part in the Versailles Peace Treaty. The Allies obstinately refused to allow Soviet delegates to attend the Paris Conference. An attempt made by the British Premier, Lloyd George, in January, 1919, to have representatives of the Soviet Republic invited, encountered the stubborn opposition both of Clemenceau and of the Right members of the British Cabinet, with the result that nothing came of it. More, the Peace Treaty was concluded not only without the Soviet Republic but against it. Germany on the one hand, and Poland on the other, were regarded as instruments of armed intervention, and their territories as a springboard for attack upon the Soviet Union.

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The Anglo-French antagonisms revealed at the Paris Conference led to a bitter struggle when the Versailles Treaty terms came to be formulated. They made their influence felt in a number of questions and led to a number of errors which were fraught with the most serious consequences. It is because of these antagonisms that Germany's territories were only insignificantly reduced by the Versailles Treaty and the hegemony of the aggressive German State, Prussia, was left completely uncurtailed in Germany itself. This decision had direct consequences for the future peace of the world.

Furthermore, the problem of German reparations, as settled by the Versailles Treaty was fraught with difficulties and contradictions which were astutely taken advantage of by German diplomacy. As we know, definite cash payments and deliveries in kind were imposed upon Germany, but German industry, which was the basis for fresh attempts at aggression, was left completely intact.

Although the Versailles Treaty provided a regular system of measures for the disarmament of Germany, this system proved to be thoroughly defective. By allowing the Germans to retain a professional army 100,000 strong, and to double its size the year after the Versailles Treaty was signed, the Allies permitted the creation of the nucleus of the German armed formations, the skeleton of Hitler's future army. Control of the observance of the military provisions of the Versailles Treaty was extremely lax. The absence of real and effective control enabled the Germans right from the outset to violate the disarmament clauses of the Versailles Treaty and to proceed to the secret rearmament of Germany.

Lastly, it should be noted that the provisions of the Versailles Treaty regarding the trial of war-guilty persons and of persons guilty of violations of the law and customs of warfare (brutalities and atrocities) were not carried out. The whole procedure in this cardinal matter was reduced to a farce. When, after the Peace Treaty was signed, the Allies demanded delivery of Wilhelm II by Holland, where he had taken refuge, the Dutch Government refused and the Allies did not insist, although, of course, they had sufficient means at their disposal to impose their will upon that Government. As to the trial of persons guilty of violating the rules of war, a so-called trial was held in Germany. It resulted in a few verdicts, mostly passed in the absence of the guilty persons, who had been warned in time and fled to neutral countries, only later to return to Germany with impunity.

The mistakes contained in the Versailles Treaty itself were aggravated in the period between the signature of the Treaty and the second world war. The refusal of the American Senate to ratify the Versailles Treaty, and the isolationist policy pursued by the United States in the early period of the peace, facilitated not a little the growth of German aggression. When, however, the United States reverted to an active policy in Europe, the first act in relation to Germany was the Dawes Plan, which with the help of loans and credits enabled her completely to modernise her industry and transport system and thus lay the economic foundations for subsequent aggression.

The Anglo - French antagonisms which manifested themselves at the Paris Conference continued to play a big part after Versailles. Britain's anxiety not to permit the establishment of French hegemony in Europe, and her consequent adherence to her traditional balance of power policy, in no little measure facilitated the violation of the Versailles Treaty by Germany.

On the other hand, the tendency displayed by the Allies during the

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Paris Peace Conference to regard Germany not only as a vanquished enemy but also as an instrument of policy hostile to the Soviet Republic continued to exercise its effects after the Versailles Treaty and became particularly active at the time of the Locarno Treaty, the chief aim of which was to draw Germany into an anti-Soviet bloc. The same purpose was pursued by the acceptance of Germany into the League of Nations in 1926.

When Hitler came to power he was chiefly aided in his violations of the Versailles Treaty and in his open preparations for acts of piratical aggression by the so-called "policy of non-intervention." This policy enabled Hitler to annul the military provisions of the Versailles Treaty in 1935, to seize the Rhine demilitarised zone in 1936, to resort, in conjunction with Mussolini, to armed intervention in Spain in 1936 to 1938, and to annex Austria in 1938 and Czechoslovakia and Klaipeda (Memel) in 1939.

This policy of connivance and direct assistance to Hitler led to the conclusion of the Anglo-German Naval Agreement of 1935, by which Great Britain sanctioned the creation of a German Navy and the building of submarines, which had been forbidden to Germany by the Versailles Treaty.

This same policy obstinately rejected repeated proposals made by the Soviet Union for the creation of real guarantees of collective security against Germany. In 1939 this policy was responsible for the failure of the Anglo-French-Soviet negotiations for a triple agreement between the Soviet Union, Great Britain and France. The year before that the "non-intervention policy" had resulted in the Munich deal, which not only surrendered Czechoslovakia to Hitler, but was also an attempt to set up a directorate of the four Powers, Germany, Italy, Great Britain and France without the Soviet Union.

Lastly, the policy of non-intervention pursued by Great Britain and France towards Germany from the time Hitler came to power led to the political decay of the League of Nations, which had been called into being by the Versailles Treaty to ensure collective security. At the same time, this policy enabled Hitler to convert Germany into an armed camp, and in 1939 to launch into a new act of piratical aggression with the object of establishing German world hegemony.

These were the chief reasons why the Versailles Peace Treaty failed to perform the tasks laid upon it. This Treaty, which Germany, with the connivance of the victors, began to violate from the moment it was signed, terminated when Germany unleashed the second world war.

Analysis of the mistakes of the Versailles and the post-Versailles period is by no means a mere academic study. It is important first and foremost because it can and should prevent a repetition of these mistakes. German aggression has cost mankind too dear for the future Peace Treaty which will follow the defeat of Hitler Germany and her associates to repeat the fatal mistakes of the Versailles Treaty.

The scarcity of LABOUR MONTHLY has been particularly felt among our readers in the Forces. One airman writes: "Any copies which civilian readers could send on to us will be greatly appreciated." Therefore, we would make two suggestions to those who feel they can spare their copy when they have finished with it: (1) send it on to a friend in the Forces; or (2) send it to us here, marked "Please Forward," and we will post it on to where it will be very warmly welcomed.

Soldiers, sailors and airmen please note. When writing, please say whether you would like these used copies sent you regularly; if so, do not forget to let us know when you change your address.

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Indian Trade Unions

(For the last few months delegates from two separate Indian trade union bodies, as guests of the Trades Union Congress, have been touring Britain. These bodies are (1) the Indian Trade Union Congress, founded 1920, and now uniting for many years the overwhelming majority of the organised workers in India; the delegate is S. A. Dange: (2) the Indian Federation of Labour, founded last year. To avoid possible confusion we print the following extracts from official documents.—ED. L.M.)

Extract from the Presidential Address of Mr. Jamnadas N. Mehta, at the First Annual Session of the Indian Federation of Labour held at Bombay on December 27, 28 and 29, 1943.

"In keeping our organisation detached from political groups we have had to face tremendous difficulties. We have been assailed from all these quarters with unprecedented ferocity and by tactics whose mendacity has been equalled only by their unscrupulousness. One or two great organs of 'truth' in this city went to the length of informing their readers that Mr. Roy and myself were receiving Rs.13,000 per month—an allegation which was the blackest lie and known to the liars as such. But we have refused to falter and we have become all the stronger for their misrepresentations."

A copy of the question asked by Mr. Laloband Navalrai and the reply by the Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Labour Member, Government of India, in the Legislative Assembly on April 4, 1944.

776. *Mr. Laloband Navalrai:* (*a*) Will the Honourable Member for Labour be pleased to state whether it is a act that his department makes a monhly contribution of Rs.13,000 to the Indian Labour Federation through Mr. M. N. Roy? If so, for what purpose? If the amount of the contribution is more or less than this figre, will the Honourable Member plase state the correct figure?

(*b*) Have any accounts been endered for the money so contribute to the Indian Labour Federation? If ot, why not?

(*c*) If the reply to the first portion of part (*b*) above be in the affirmative, will the Honourable Member please lay on the table of the House copies of such statements received for the last six months? If not, why not?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:

(*a*) A monthly grant of Rs.13,000 is made to the Indian Federation of Labour for doing propaganda to keep up the morale of industrial labour.

(*b*) Yes, Sir.

(*c*) No. The accounts are subject to the same scrutiny as all public accounts and no useful purpose would be served by placing them on the table.

The Editor of LABOUR MONTHLY will be very glad to receive contributions in the form of finished articles or of suggestions and data for articles. The customary proviso must be made that no responsibility undertaken for manuscripts sent to him nor can he promise to enter into correspondence regarding contributions not accepted.

The articles in the LABOUR MONHLY are indexed in the International Index to Periodicals, New York City, U.S.A., as well as in the annual index in each December issue.

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Socialist-Communist Unity in Italy

by PIETRO NENNI

Secretary of the Italian Socialist Party

(*from* L'Avanti, *Rome, August* 10, 1944)

THE first joint meeting of Socialist and Communist leaders, held in Rome yesterday, will be hailed with great satisfaction by the working-class, the vast family of all workers.

During the past few weeks, there has been much loose talk regarding the fusion of the Italian Socialist and Communist Parties. Such fusion is not the order of the day. Parties do not merge for sentimental reasons.

Both on a national and international scale, Socialists and Communists have been the exponents of particular demands which have been translated into particular experiences, during the past twenty years. We now wish fully to benefit from the fruits of our experiences.

None the less, fusion of the two parties cannot be an initial step; it must come about through consistent, united action. Such work will now enter a more concrete phase.

The decisions reached during yesterday's meeting, in fact, cover all working - class political and Trade Union activities. This does not signify that there is an identical viewpoint on every issue, that similar emphasis is placed by Socialists and Communists on every single problem; but there is a natural tendency toward similar objectives. This mutual tendency is derived from the identical interests which we serve, namely, the interests of the working - classes in their struggle against agrarian, reactionary and monarchic plutocratic minorities, which seek to hinder the profound democratisation of our country.

The meeting between the leaders of the two working-class parties was held just at the right moment. Generally speaking, matters are not going very well. Lacking the barest economic welfare, the population is suffering. Workers, office employees, technicians, intellectuals, are especially hard hit. The purge of fascist elements is lagging. Participation in the war should be strengthened in harmony with the general tendency of the war, as demonstrated by great Soviet victories in the East and the first great Anglo-American victory in the West.

What is all this caused by? First of all, fascism precipitated our country into the most absurd of wars. Too many of our cities are heaps of ruins (such is the fate of Florence today). Nazi raids, war destruction, have reduced to zero the potential production capacity of our nation.

But the present situation is also due to the fact that with every forward step which we take, we clash against the old reactionary world which yesterday formed a solid block around fascism and today rallies around the monarchy. To isolate these reactionary forces, which rear their heads once again and attempt to bend to their own ends the efforts of the nation to free itself, this is the task which history assigns to the working-class, this is the national function of all workers.

The nation cannot arise, it cannot be saved unless the ideals, interests and solutions of the working-class triumph both in the world-wide conflict and on the home front. On this precept are based the decisions reached by the two parties. There is nothing sectarian in our policies, but there is a logical development which binds our particular aspirations to those of the entire working-class in all problems, the war, the constitutional question, the rebuilding, the bettering of society.

We do not doubt that the policy traced by us yesterday along general

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lines will become the policy of the entire Italian democratic movement, that the agreement between Socialists and Communists will be in our country, as it is elsewhere, the prerequisite for a democratic development which will eliminate the clash between an extreme leftist group headed toward neo-fascism.

The success of such a democratic development depends to a great extent on the action taken by other democratic groups, those who are already struggling for the establishment of an Italian republic. In any case, what we are aiming at is to hasten and strengthen the vast movement for the union of all popular forces, and to isolate the fascist minority and the hidden reactionary forces.

This is what we wish to do and this is what we will accomplish, because the working-class does not lack either the strength or the will to save the country and to annihilate once and for all the reactionary strongholds.

"How to Win the Peace"

by WILLIAM RUST

THIS is good, hard-hitting stuff, written with clarity and emphasis. It is one of those rare political booklets which can be put into the hands of the man in the street with the confidence that it will be read and understood. *How to win the Peace* possesses a remarkable simplicity and vigour.

But there is nothing in the treatment which suggests a writing down to the reader. On the contrary, knotty problems are not evaded, neither are great issues vulgarised. The strength of the booklet springs from the resolution with which the basic questions of world politics are tackled; its clarity is derived from the definiteness of the conclusions reached and the maturity of Marxist thought in this country.

Harry Pollitt's booklet firmly establishes the claims of the Communist Party to the role of leadership in post-war Britain. This is the programme of a party that knows where it is going, that has evolved past the stage of general propaganda and is reaching out to statesmanship. This profound significance of the booklet will not be overlooked by those reactionary political groupings in Britain against which the fight of the Communist Party is directed.

The success of the Socialist Revolution in Russia has demonstrated the ability of the working people not only to pull down the old order, but also to build up the new. Now, in many countries, the working people are confronted with great constructive tasks in a different form to those that faced the workers and peasants of the former Tsarist Empire as a result of their victory in November, 1917.

The coming victory over fascism and the triumph of the world democratic alliance, in which the Soviet Union is the corner-stone, present the working people with the opportunity of assuming the leadership of the nation and of carrying through sweeping social changes which will hasten the day when Socialism is achieved.

This is the fundamental message that Pollitt has to expound. This is why he returns again and again to an explanation of the new world situation that has opened up, joining issue with those politicians who, dully unable to comprehend events, think that the coming peace will be a repetition of the last, and firmly arguing with these workers who, giving way to cynicism and despair, lack faith in their own power to change the world.

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Pollitt's central theme is that the unity of the Labour and Progressive forces in this country, based on the experiences of the co-operation reached during the war, will make it possible to work out an agreed programme of social advance and to carry it into effect despite the opposition of the reactionary Tories.

The case presented is overwhelming, it is argued from various angles and combined with an exposition of the case for Socialism and an explanation of the road that must be followed in order to advance towards it. This part of the booklet is of special value in view of the still existing sectarian weakness within the Labour movement, which results in a separation of the Socialist idea from the stages in the fight to achieve it.

Certain leaders of the Labour Party persistently play on this weakness. The Popular Front in 1938-39 could have prevented the war. But it was denounced by Transport House as a betrayal of Socialism and large numbers were taken in by this deceit. Today this cry is taken up again. This is how Pollitt answers it:

It is not how "left" the immediate programme itself may be that determines whether it carries us forward towards liberation, towards Socialism. It is the degree to which the workers and the people generally can be united in the fight for it, and their enemies be isolated and exposed. It is the degree to which the progressive forces can increase their power. Moreover, we have to realise that the actual *achievement* of this programme, or even a part of it, will itself change the country we live in, the conditions in which we carry on our work, and—most important of all—it will change the minds of the people and prepare them for yet other far-reaching changes.

Marshal Tito stated recently that the military defeat of Germany would not be followed by the automatic disappearance of fascism and that it has roots in many countries. This basic truth also runs through Pollitt's booklet.

Why is the achievement of Labour and Progressive unity a matter of such vital urgency? Because the power and the viciousness of the reactionary and pro-fascist forces in Britain is such that they will be able to rob the people of the fruits of victory unless the initiative passes fully into the hands of the progressive forces. Pollitt gives many examples of how the diehard Tories are coming out in their true colours as enemies of the people now that they think their skins are safe.

But it is not only a question of defending existing standards against reactionary attacks. The job is a much bigger one. Britain must be reconstructed from top to bottom; working conditions, schools, houses and social services must all be made worthy of the country and the people. Such a great social programme must have firm roots in a prosperous industry, but that there is no guarantee of possessing except on the basis of planning and state control. The issue is put succinctly by Pollitt:

The very weaknesses and contradictions inherent in monopoly capitalism in its present stage requires an extension of state control if Britain is to be saved from disaster after a short-lived trade boom after the war.

This conclusion is supported with a wealth of economic data, a survey of the class structure of society and an analysis of the colonial system. The facts and figures in these sections are of enormous value to those in search of a realistic picture of our class system and the workings of the capitalist system.

In his concluding chapter Pollitt eloquently expounds the case for Socialism and the meaning of the fight for a united Labour movement. One feels in this chapter the surging drive of the Communist Party and its enthusiastic confidence in the ability

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of the common people to create the new life. It is a warning to the leaders of the Conservative and Labour Parties that any attempt on their part to carve up the political leadership of Britain between themselves, sharing government and opposition to the exclusion of the new, virile political forces now arising, is doomed to failure. The Communist movement in Britain is knocking at the door of government.

Book Reviews

Searchlight on India

British Soldier in India : the Letters of Clive Branson. Communist Party. 2*s*6*d*.

The death of Clive Branson on the Arakan front in February, 1944, was the loss of one of the most promising and outstanding figures of the rising generation in Britain: an artist and poet; a communist: a thinker; a tireless organiser and political leader; and a fighter. It is a loss that could ill be spared, and that will be felt the more deeply as these letters of his from India are read.

But this book is more than a memorial of Clive Branson. It stands in its own right as one of the most valuable books on India that could be put in the hands of any reader today. The problem often arises what introductory book on India could be recommended to the general reader, who does not yet want to study a political treatise, but wants rather a living picture of human beings. There are some novels like Forster's classic *Passage to India*, though old, or Mulk Raj Anand's stories which can help. But there can be no question what to recommend first now. Give your friend, no matter whom, no matter what his previous outlook, Branson's *British Soldier in India* to read. It will open his eyes. Vivid, easily read, unforgettable, it will arouse passionate interest and concern in the most indifferent, and teach more than many bulkier volumes.

In very simple compass these letters, mingled with poems and sketches, give a picture of the Indian people and their conditions; of the army in India and the narrow world of the Sahibs; of the Congress and the tangled conflict of 1942-44; of the Communist Party of India and the workers' movement; and finally of the famine.

It is also a picture of the writer: of one who was alive in every fibre of his being; who could think and feel and act. It may help many to understand better, who may have been misled by the commonplace caricatures of Marxist "dogmatists," how a communist responds to life. It is a magnificent expression of a communist soldier in the present war.

It would be tempting to quote many passages at length. Here are one or two.

On housing:

Never will any of us who have come to India for this war forget the unbelievable, indescribable poverty in which we have found people living *wherever* we went, and in millions. We are all agreed that if the people back home knew of these conditions there would be a hell of a row—because this state of affairs is maintained in the name of the British. And yet, too, we are all agreed that there is no parallel, no common visual or verbal symbols that could convey the slightest understanding of this state of affairs to the people at home. How can I tell the people of Nine Elms that their condemned houses are palaces compared with Indian slums? They just wouldn't believe me—would think me a liar. At home one is shocked if families live in one room. But how often do people from India explain that millions of human beings here *have no room at all*, that whole families live in *houses* made of plaited grass, rags, bits of tin, a bit of carpet—in all not more than 8 ft. by 4 ft. and perhaps 4 ft. high. And one can

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see this not only in *every* village, but on the outskirts of every town before one ever reaches the brick-built slums in the centre of the town.

On the famine:

The last part of my journey was like a nightmare. The endless view of plains, crops and small stations, turned almost suddenly into one long trail of starving people. Men, women, children, babies, looked up into the passing carriage in their last hope for food. These people were not just hungry—this was *famine*. When we stopped, children swarmed round the carriage windows, repeating hopelessly "Bukshish, sahib"—with the monotony of a damaged gramophone. Others sat on the ground, just waiting. I saw women—almost fleshless skeletons, their clothes grey with dust from wandering, with expressionless faces, not *walking*, but foot steadying foot, as though not knowing where they went. As we pulled towards Calcutta, for *miles*, little children naked, with inflated bellies stuck on stick-like legs, held up empty tins towards us. They were children still—they laughed and waved as we went by. Behind them one could see the brilliant fiendish green of the new crop.

On Cripps and India:

The only piece of news of interest arises from a speech I have just read by Cripps, in England. He is reported to have told some Indians (industrial Bevin boys): "It is part of your job while you are here to study organisation of labour so that you may, on your return to your own country, help your fellow-workers to organise stable Trade Unions, not as political parties, but as protection for workers against exploitation and sweating and as a means of encouraging the sound development of Indian industries.

Would someone kindly inform Cripps that on May 1 at Nagpur the twentieth session of the All-India T.U.C. met—300 delegates representing over 350,000 workers—and demanded, among other things, "as a protection for workers against exploitation," the transference of power to a national government. Also on May 1, the same day as Cripps spoke, railwaymen, tramwaymen, textile workers, etc., were organising meetings in Bombay, Calcutta, Karachi, demanding, mainly, the opening of the Second Front. And, above all, one should not forget the great Kisan (peasant) organisations. It is always surprising to such "brilliant" legal minds as Cripps' that the ignorant workers and peasants, *in their own way*, arrive at an understanding of politics far in advance of their betters. And also tell Cripps it would make the organisation of the workers much easier if Meerut trials and the imprisonment of men such as Dange and Mirajkar did not take place. "Safe" Labour leaders are not fashionable among ignorant Indian and Chinese workers.

Or the confession of faith written a few weeks before his death:

Always remember that one is given by fate only one lifetime in which to work and live for humanity. There is no greater crime, in my opinion, than to renounce the world, no matter for what excuse. If anything should happen to either of us, never say, "It is finished." For we have both lived for one purpose, the emancipation of the working people. If by chance one of us has to leave this work before it is done, then let the other go on and see it through—not in the spirit of holy self-sacrifice—as a monk or a nun—but even more in the fullness of human experience. What we miss we can only find in knowing humanity more deeply and not in the ever-narrowing circumference of private memories. Life for me has only been worthwhile in so far as I have been able to show, even a few people, the way to *forward* living. And, above all, whatever happens, let us never for one instant, on the slightest excuse, forget we are human beings and belong to the brotherhood of man. Tyrants and hermits are tarred with the same brush. Whatever happens you must go on *living*—there are so many years of grand work ahead.

British Soldier in India will remain, not only as a living picture of conditions in India under British rule in 1942-44, but as a permanent treasure of British communist literature.

R. P. D.

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G.B.S. Boiled Down

Everybody's Political What's What ? by Bernard Shaw (Constable, 10*s*).

THIS IS an extraordinary thing to have happened to a British institution. G.B.S. has boiled himself down: with a consequent loss of many volatile essences and a considerable precipitation of sediment. In his eighty-ninth year (still to be regarded as a very great age despite the growing mob of octogenarians revealed by British vital statistics) he has had the temerity to put together in one volume of as many closely-printed pages as a leap year has days his well-known opinions on economics, politics, education, science and religion; thereby not only cutting in before the crowd of waiting anthologists and systematisers but also risking doing violence to the view that each man is not so much a single person but a sort of musical chairs of different individuals from infancy to dotage. For, having once pointed out that Herbert Spencer had no right in a later edition to suppress the views of his earlier self, so too it might seem that this sedimentary Shaw, by calmly superseding what in one preface after another appeared to be the last word on such subjects as education, etc., was going against the canon he himself had fixed.

But it is not so. There is no essential change. He has nothing new to say. The same views, the same arguments, the same almost textually identical reminiscences of his own childhood or of the lives of outstanding figures in history, are set forth in this book, which bears the mark, despite its repetitions, of careful work and planning. That is, it is not a fugitive or hastily compiled book.

Now since Shaw cannot possibly be suspected of having sat down for months on end to pore over the vast collected edition of his own works, the conclusion must be drawn that his views really are substantially unchanged, that this most highly talented artist, with his vivid impressionability, has not responded to the new developments, that a world convulsed in this last quarter-century by revolution and counter-revolution and war has brought no fundamental reorientation of outlook, no express doubts as to the essential correctness still of recipes first formulated in the years before the last war.

Apply the acid test (first mentioned by Woodrow Wilson): The Soviet Union. With twenty-five years given him for reflection after its first impact, Shaw can today write of the Russian Revolution:

> "The Soviet leaders, having read no later Socialist gospel than that of Karl Marx, and being therefore pre-Fabian, did not realise that Socialist statesmen must not nationalise a penny of capital nor an acre of land until the nation is provided with a civil service ready to use that capital and cultivate that land without a day's delay" (p. 103).

Wherein does this wooden doctrinaire outlook (first enunciated by him in *The Perfect Wagnerite* fifty years ago, and wrong then) differ from Kautsky's criticism of the Revolution? Kautsky, however, in his last book wrote: "If Lenin is right, my life's work has been in vain;" and though concluding in his own favour, at any rate saw the alternatives. But of this fundamental "either . . or" Shaw is unaware.

For the rest, Shaw himself is in danger of falling into that last stage of Critical-Utopians, as it was foretold, though under vastly different and vastly more mitigating circumstances, in the 1847 Manifesto: "By degrees they sink into the category of the reactionary conservative Socialists depicted above, differing from these only by more systematic pedantry, and by their fanatical and superstitious belief in the miraculous effects of their social science."

And who made up the ranks of the conservative Socialists?

"To this section," wrote Marx and Engels nearly a century ago, "belong economists, philanthropists, humanitarians, improvers of the condition of the working-class, organisers of charity, members of societies for the preventiion of cruelty to animals, temperance fanatics, hole-and-corner reformers of every imaginable kind."

R. P. A.

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Publications Received

BOOKS

International River and Canal Transport by Brig.-Gen. Sir Osborne Mance (O.U.P., 10s6d, 116 pp. and Map.)

The Problem of Valuation for Rating by Hicks, Hicks and Leser (C.U.P., 7s6d, 96 pp.).

John Maclean. A Fighter for Freedom by Tom Bell (Scottish C.P., 5s, 173 pp.).

PAMPHLETS

Greece Fights for Freedom (Greek-American Labour Committee, 30 pp.).

Plastics (L.R.D., 1s, 40 pp.).

Electricity—Public versus Private (L.R.D., 6d, 40 pp.).

Reinstatement and Retraining. Workers Pocket Series, No. 14. (L.R.D., 2d, 16 pp.).

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